



# Climate Change

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## New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine Policy Statement

### Policy statement

The New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) recognises climate change is an emerging major risk to public health.

The NZCPHM seeks to both promote understanding of the public health consequences of climate change, and provide leadership in preventing and preparing for those consequences. The NZCPHM also promotes the public health co-benefits of action on climate change, where mitigating climate change will also benefit population health in other ways.

### Background

Realistic<sup>2,3</sup> modelling scenarios of global climate change point to catastrophic public health consequences from both direct and indirect effects<sup>5-7</sup>. New Zealand will not be insulated from these consequences.

The NZCPHM considers it has an important professional responsibility to:

- advance better understanding of the risks, consequences and health equity impacts of the changing global climate<sup>5,8,9</sup>, and
- provide strong leadership in preventing, mitigating and preparing for these serious public health consequences<sup>6,7,10-15</sup>.

Acknowledged uncertainties over the timing and magnitude of climate-induced public health issues do not detract from the NZCPHM's responsibility for public health leadership in addressing the associated risks. The NZCPHM notes that managing uncertainty and risk are core competencies and routine activities for public health medicine practice.

There is also considerable overlap (public health co-benefit) between emissions reduction measures and important public health and equity gains<sup>13,14</sup>. For example, transport infrastructure redesign to encourage active travel, healthy eating (including reduced red meat and animal fat consumption), and improving home insulation provide significant other public health benefits as well as helping mitigate climate change. The NZCPHM endorses public health action with climate change co-benefits.

### Links with other NZCPHM policies

Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement

Health Equity

Māori Health (forthcoming)

Climate Change (substantive) (forthcoming)

## References and further information

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